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GIANCANA Sam
OEG2 MAFIA
CIA 103 Bissell, Richard

Violence marked hoodlum's career

By Jay Branegan

ALTHO SAM (Momo) Giancana was known for most of his life as a violent rackets boss, an international playboy, and a mastermind of Chicago crime syndicate operations, he may be best remembered as "that gangster the Central Intelligence Agency hired to kill Castro."

Richard Bissell, former CIA official, said recently Giancana and mobster John Roselli were involved in CIA contingency plans to assassinate Cuban Premier Fidel Castro in the early 1960s. Bissell headed the CIA's "dirty tricks" department at the time of the 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion.

GIANCANA'S flirtation with the federal intelligence unit was a far cry from his beginnings as a getaway driver for West Side hoodlums in the 1920s.

A young man with an uncontrollable temper, he was

arrested—and released for lack of evidence—in three murders before he was 20. He was convicted in 1925 of stealing a car, but until a 1965 term for contempt of court, served only one other prison sentence. Ironically, that prison term marked the beginning of his bloody rise to the top of Chicago gangdom.

In the late 1930s he was sentenced to the federal prison at Terre Haute, Ind., for operating a moonshine still. There he met South Side policy boss Edward Jones, who told him of the big money to be made in policy wheels, one field of crime neglected by the Mafia.

When he gained his freedom, Giancana and other "young bloods" drove the old policy kings out of the racket with kidnappings, bombings, and murders.

GIANCANA THUS became the top gambling boss for the

mob, ruling his fiefdom with a bloody fierceness that perhaps explains why the Selective Service System classified him a constitutional psychopath.

Giancana and his cohorts engineered a series of murders in 1954 and '55, forcing former Capone henchman Tony Accardo to step aside as boss of Chicago crime in 1956 after a fusillade of shots were fired at his front door.

Once on top, the West Side tough-guy began living the high-life, dating nightclub entertainers, showering them with expensive gifts, and conducting flamboyant spending sprees in nightclubs in Europe, Florida and Nevada.

[Giancana's wife Angeline died in 1954, and his three daughters are now in their 40s].

One of his most publicized romances was with Phyllis McGuire, one of the famous nightclub and TV singing sisters. When Miss McGuire began dating comedian Dan Rowan, Giancana's CIA buddies helped him spy on her in 1960 in Las Vegas, it was reported recently.

IN THE LATE 1930s and during the 60s, Giancana employed as his personal henchman Richard Cain, the enigmatic Mafia double-agent who once worked as a Cook County sheriff's police investigator. Cain was murdered gangland-style in late 1973 in a West Side cafe.

Giancana dropped from

sight, and from daily operating authority in the syndicate after he was jailed a year in 1963 for contempt and for refusing to testify to a federal grand jury under a grant of immunity from prosecution. In 1966 he began a self-imposed and lavish exile in Mexico, maintaining two villas and a penthouse in Mexico City. He was kicked out by Mexican authorities in 1974.

While abroad, authorities believe, he set up and directed some of the syndicate's international investments. He also directed the mob's overall strategy in Chicago, authorities think, using Cain as his representative.

Soon after he got back to Chicago Giancana was again hauled before a grand jury, and agreed to testify under an immunity grant. He appeared several times, but investigators reportedly were ready to indict him for not telling the truth about his Mexican adventures.